

Socialist Action

CONTENTS :		Abortion Rights	2
Editorial	4	Labour Party	4
Vietnam	9	The N.H.S.	7
Ireland	10	Teachers	8
Internationalism	5	Low Pay	6
Ecology	6	Gay News	7
Joe Hansen	2	The A.N.L.	3

A Socialist Monthly, Published in the Interests of Working People

March/April 79

Price 10p

FIGHT THE CONCORDAT!

Last January 28th, over 1.5 million public sector workers struck. A demonstration the same day mobilised over 80,000 in central London demanding that their leaders call an all-out stoppage in support of their wage claim.

The 'day of action' expressed the pent-up anger of millions of the low paid at Callaghan's wage-slashing policies. It was the high point of a growing revolt as, over the past month, ever-wider layers have been drawn into action, often pre-empting their leaders' attempts to contain the situation, as in the case of the ambulancedrivers.

Suprise

Undoubtedly, this upsurge took Callaghan by surprise. When he postponed the election last October, he took a calculated risk. He assumed that his TUC allies, who had spinelessly supported his wage-cutting policies, would continue to enforce government pay policy. After all, they had supported the first three rounds of the Social Contract - despite escalating unemployment.

His faith in the TUC was not misplaced. When the first serious challenge to the 5% norm came with the fireman's strike last year, the TUC did their utmost to 'isolate' the strike and demoralise the men back to work.

What Callaghan left out of his calculations was the rank and file. Having suffered a substantial drop in wages during three years of the Social Contract, they were no longer willing to stomach more pro-capitalist policies. The militancy and determination of, first

the lorry drivers - then the ambulance drivers, cleaners & hospital workers - forced their vacillating leaders into calling actions which exploded the 5% norm.

Hysteria

Callaghan's reaction to the upsurge was to launch an anti-union hysteria, shrilly denouncing the strikers as 'irresponsible' and branding the action of pickets as 'terrorist'. He was backed-up by other members of the cabinet who threatened everything from a six-month wage freeze to introducing a 'state of emergency'.

The extent to which Callaghan - and his TUC allies - have moved to the right can be seen in the Concordat recently arranged between them. This agreement, hastily cobbled together in response to the mass pay revolt, is designed to assure employers that a future Labour government will be able to carry out its austerity measures by relying on the TUC to



curb rank-and-file democracy and break strikes.

The proposals it contains are almost identical to those which appeared earlier in Barbara Castle's 'In Place of Strife', or the Tories more savage Industrial Relations Act.

Concordat

While the document does not put forward any precise pay norms - to avoid embarrassment to the TUC before its own members - it does propose that there should be an annual 'economic assessment' when both sides of industry sit down and work out a pay ceiling.

In order to force workers to abide by these norms, the document tables major inroads into the

democratic rights of trade unionists. It talks, for example, of strike action being a 'last resort', and the need to avoid strikes altogether during negotiations.

It poses the need for 'secret ballots' to break the solidarity of workers and open them up to the anti-union propaganda of the TV and press. It goes on to talk of the need to end 'secondary picketing' (ie. solidarity action) in a way distinctly reminiscent of the Industrial Relations Act. Labour will, in other words, do all the Tories want - without legislation.

Election

The 'Concordat' was obviously hastily put together as a platform **continued on page 8**

IRAN: THE POWDER KEG

February 11th saw the climax of the growing mass action against the Pahlavi dictatorship which, for years, had banned democratic unions, filled the jails with political prisoners, denied womens rights and trampled on those of the national minorities which make up 60% of the Iranian population.

A mass uprising in the streets of Tehran - leading to armed confrontations with 'elite' military corps - toppled the Bakhtiar government appointed by the Shah in a last desperate bid to head off the growing unrest.

The defeat of the Shah and the appointment by the Ayotollah of a Provisional Government - headed by Dr. Barzagan - has by no means however solved the problems that mobilised millions on the streets or decided the outcome of the revolution.

Unity?

For many months, disparate forces marched together under the label 'Khomeini's people' because they were all united in a desire to overthrow the hated Pahlavi dictat-



Armed opposition to the Shah's rule.

orship. The uprising itself was the result of escalating actions which seemed as if the entire nation was involved in a common struggle.

Workers, who had been on strike for months, set up elected committees demanding workers' control in industry. Peasants, in certain cases, seized the land. Universities were turned into popular bases of opposition to the Shah. Towns throughout Iran saw the creation of 'neighbourhood committees' which helped mobilise mass demonstrations like that on Feb 8th when over 1 million poured into the streets of Tehran against the Bakhtiar government.

The unrest spread into the army which had been the main bulwark of the Shah. Rank-and-file soldiers and airmen - like those from the Doshom Teppah air base - began to identify with the peoples' demands, distribute arms and set up committees demanding the right to free speech, to participate in politics & to elect their own officers.

Constituent Assembly

Now that the Shah has been overthrown, however, there exists no consensus as to the development of the revolution or the type of society to emerge out of it. On the contrary, it is clear that growing

divisions have arisen amongst the once united forces on clear class lines.

The tasks of the Barzagan government - appointed from above by the Ayotollah - were summed up with unusual bluntness by the New York Times (Feb 8th): "Barzagan's mission is to preserve the continued hegemony of the nationalist bourgeoisie in Iran and protect it against the revolutionary forces unleashed by years of strife, strikes and militancy".

The New York Times is dead on target. The Barzagan government has grouped around it support from the Iranian bourgeoisie - remnants of the old, discredited National Front - which has become increasingly frightened of the power and independent action of the masses. It has been this fear which has prompted it to refuse to 'legalise' parties of the left and to postpone the elections to a Constituent Assembly in which the masses would be free to choose their own government.

continued on page 10

LABOUR & ABORTION

Last November, over 500 trade union delegates attended a conference to discuss the issue of abortion rights. The conference, called by NAC and LARC*, was sponsored by 5 national unions and attended by delegates representing a much wider spectrum of the labour movement: teachers, engineers, transport workers & the public sector, The fact that the conference was so well attended is indicative of

ALL OUT MARCH 31st

Nowhere in the world are women guaranteed the absolute right to control their fertility, the absolute right to decide whether they want children and, if so, under what conditions.

Millions of women incur mutilation and death because their right to contraception & their right to legal abortion under safe conditions are denied by civil law & by the church. Women suffer physical injuries from clandestine abortions; they are sometimes imprisoned, and always humiliated, because they demand this right...

The laws 'liberalising' abortions that have been passed in such countries as the United States, France, Italy or Great Britain impose severe limits on the right to choose, including time limits & the denial of this right to underage and immigrant women, as well as the 'conscience clause' that 'legitimises' doctors' refusal to perform abortions.

Under these laws, women must often give proof that they have been raped, that they are prone to 'mental instability' or that they run 'grave risks' to their health in order to get an abortion. And in most cases the final decision rests with the medical profession.

Women do not confront these problems only as individuals. Throughout the world, women are struggling for the right to control their bodies under adequate conditions & to decide when and if they want children.

The struggle for the right to safe legal abortion has been led by the women's liberation movement. But this struggle concerns all movements and individuals who are fighting for democratic rights & social justice.

Women's right to control their bodies, to contraception and abortion, and to refuse forced sterilisation, have become international questions that have called forth debates and confrontations around the world. The forces opposed to women's rights to choose are powerful.

They include governments, churches, the medical profession, political parties and anti-abortion groups that force women to suffer and die in the name of morality. The result of the struggle to defeat these forces will have an impact on all battles for elementary human rights.

WOMEN DEMAND:

- * The right to control our own bodies
- * The right to contraception
- * The right to abortion
- * The right to refuse forced sterilisation.

the wide impact upon the labour movement that the struggle by NAC to secure abortion rights has had over the past few years.

Threat

Many trade union leaders addressed the conference, calling for an extension of abortion facilities and pledging opposition against further attacks upon women's present abortion rights.

While the latter is not an immediate threat, it is clear that it could well become one after the next election when SPUC might try to get another Private Member's Bill into the Commons as James White did a few years ago.

Having sustained a major campaign to roll back the gains of the 1967 Act for a decade now, it is almost certain they will up the anti-abortion offensive in the coming sessions.

Activity

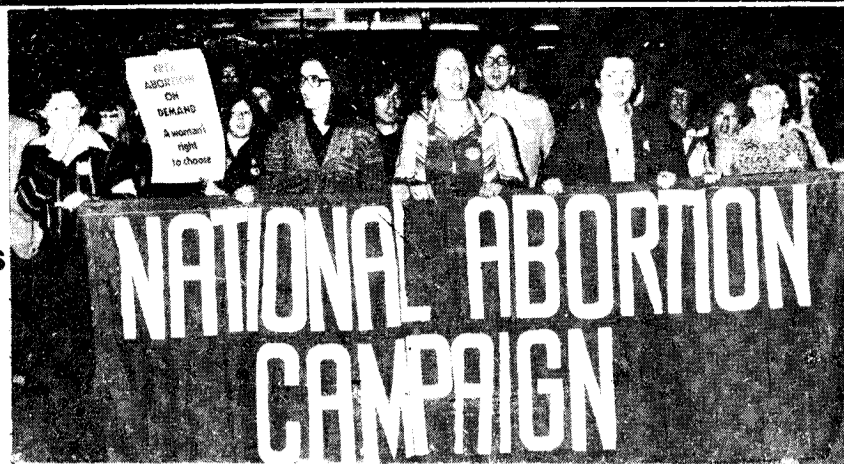
Alan Fisher (Gen. Sec. of NUPE) was particularly forceful in pledging his support against this reactionary alliance. "I am neither for nor against abortion", he said. "Abortion, the right to choose, is a basic right of our women members which we must fight for..."

While pledging support, however - and voting for action if restrictive legislation is put on the books - many union leaders were quick to point out that this would depend on the rank-and-file who 'lagged' behind their leaders on this issue.

This hoary old chesnut, which has often been used in the past as

by:

Sabina Roberts



an excuse for inactivity, just does not bear close examination. In a union like the NUT, for example, it has been the members who have been far ahead of the leaders in trying to get the union committed to the struggle for abortion rights.

If in other unions there has been less interest, then it is up to the leaders to 'lead' by raising the issue and trying to mobilise wide support for all actions to defend women's rights.

Labour Government

'Paper support' - like the resolutions passed by the T. U. C. and Labour Party conferences in 1976 - are not sufficient to stop anti-abortion moves and pioneer a woman's right to choose. Only by raising the issue in the unions and by mobilising mass support for action in the streets can the labour movement become an ally for women in the fight for their rights.

Drawing wide layers of trade unionists into activity in support of women's rights would make it much more difficult for the Labour government to 'flout' the democratically arrived at decisions by the TUC or Labour Party conferences.

Two years ago, both the TUC &

Labour Party - mainly in response to the Benyon Bill - passed resolutions in support of a woman's right to abortion on request. The Labour government ignored such decisions however and - backing down before SPUC's reactionary pressure - set up a Select Committee to investigate abuses under the 1967 Act.

The result was a major inroad into women's rights since access to abortion for 'foreign' women was severely curtailed as was the time limit under which abortions could legally take place.

International Woman's Day

Mobilising mass action to force the Labour leaders to abide by conference decisions should be the focal point of all those involved in the struggle for abortion rights. The action proposed at the Conference, to support International Woman's Day, could be the first step in this direction.

This day, on which millions of women around the world will be demonstrating against reactionary laws, could become a springboard in the ongoing fight to make Labour leaders oppose all anti-abortion moves and support the right to choose.

JOSEPH HANSEN (1910-1979)

Tony Roberts



On January 18th, leading Trotskyist militant Joseph Hansen died. He was 68. Joe's death will be a serious loss both to his comrades in the SWP(US) and the Fourth International which he dedicated his life to building over many decades.

His loss will be particularly felt by those who, over the years, had the chance to personally experience his dedication, political insight and maturity of judgement.

Joe Hansen joined the Trotskyist movement in the USA over 40 years ago during the Depression. His early years were influenced by a very close association with both Leon Trotsky - to whom he served as secretary between 1937-40 - and Jim Cannon, founder of American Trotskyism. Throughout his life, as a leading member of the SWP and the Fourth International, Joe Hansen tried to apply the politics and organisational principles he learned from these great revolutionaries.

In the post-war years, Joe Hansen played an important theoretical role, contributing to the major new questions facing the Fourth International at that time, such as the nature of the Eastern European states and the unfolding of the Cuban revolution. His writings on these issues - particularly on Cuba - became authoritative works which influenced an entire generation.

In the early 1960s, he played a very important part in trying to restore the unity of the Fourth International which had suffered from a harmful ten year split. His editorship of *Intercontinental Press* (set up soon after the re-unification in 1963) was a model of revolutionary journalism.

Probably Joe Hansen's most important contribution was made during the last decade of his life, when he led a successful fight within the Fourth International to reverse the erroneous 'guerrillist' line adopted by the majority in the late '60s. Considering this to be his greatest achievement, Joe's writings on this issue are a model to young revolutionaries on how to conduct a debate with scrupulous accuracy, non-factionalism and in a precise and lucid manner.

In the last few years of his life, Joe was forced to suffer a vicious frame-up campaign conducted by the denizens of the Clapham High Street sect, the WRP, which accused him of being a 'CIA agent' or 'accomplice of the GPU'. Joe had no need to defend himself

against Healy's Stalinist slanders, which were prompted no doubt, by the growth of the Fourth International and the disintegration of his own sectarian forces. His record is spotless. It is one which, through his loyalty to the banner of revolutionary socialism for over 40 years, and his maturity of judgement and personal sincerity, is an example to us all.

At a meeting in New York last month, a fund of \$20,000 was set up to help publish all of Joe's more important political writings. Such writings will stand as an object lesson to thousands on how to approach and analyse the great events of the class struggle from a revolutionary viewpoint.

The way to honour Joe Hansen is not just to mourn him. It is to continue the task to which he dedicated his life: building the Fourth International.

Publishing Fund

Sponsors of the Joseph Hansen Publishing Fund include: Robert Alexander, Tariq Ali, Robin Blackburn, Hugo Blanco, Pierre Broue, Ken Coates, Tamara Deutcher, Bernadette McAliskey, Louis Sinclair, Mary-Alice Waters, Ernie Tate, Evelyn Reed, Nahuel Moreno.

All contributions to the fund - which should be in by March 31 - should be sent to: Joseph Hansen Publishing Fund, 32 Lambeth Towers, Kennington Rd, London, S. E. 11.

The Anti-Nazi League & The Struggle Against Racism :

THE WAY FORWARD

The ANL was launched just over a year ago. It was launched at a time of almost unparalleled hysteria against the Black community.

For months, the Tory press had indulged in 'scare stories' against illegal immigrants. Leading Tories, following Powell, had called for tightening up immigration quotas. Margaret Thatcher herself, in her 'hawkish' role, was soon talking of the dangers of white people being swamped by Black immigrants, calling for 'pass laws' and encouraging voluntary repatriation.

Sheltering behind this racist upsurge, the NF stepped up its activities. No doubt flushed by earlier electoral successes, it intensified its anti-immigration campaign and launched deliberately provocative marches through high immigrant areas.

Step Forward

The launching of the ANL was a major step towards stemming this racist tide. Within a few months, it was able to draw tens of thousands around its meetings, carnivals and mobilisations to defend Black people (as at Brick Lane).

It was no doubt the very success of the ANL - combined with later criticism of Thatcher's sharp shift to the right on immigration - which began to worry sections of the ruling class. Papers which had originally been sympathetic to the ANL anti-Nazi image (like the Times) began to denounce it as an 'ultra-left plot'.

What the mass actions of the ANL showed was the tremendous potential for drawing thousands of young people into the fight against racism. Such actions vividly exposed the cowardice of the Labour leaders who, instead of organising a real opposition to the racist backlash, were spinelessly bending before it.

Limited

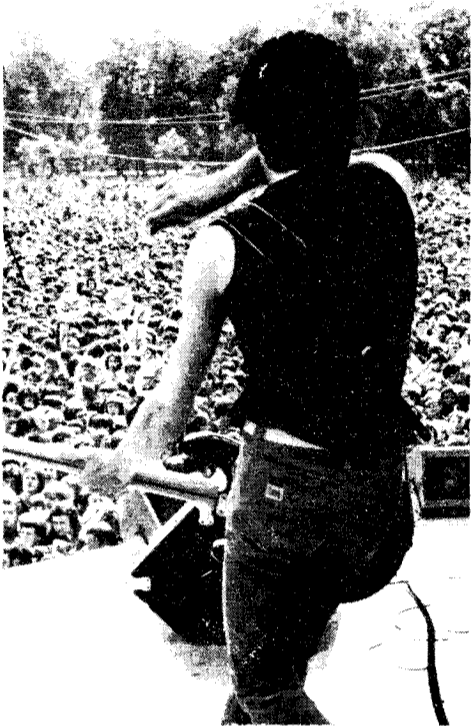
While the mass actions of the ANL have undoubtedly helped to stem this racist tide, however, the potential they held within them has not yet been realised.

Since its inception, the ANL (dominated by the SWP) has focused almost all its propaganda, activity and mobilisations around the NF.

As ANL press secretary Peter Haines put it (no doubt speaking for most of the steering cttee): "I see it (the ANL) as an emergency operation. The Front has been making ground electorally, in the schools, in the working class generally. It is an emergency job of propaganda

and activity to stop just that".

Undoubtedly, combatting the NF influence is an integral part of any anti-racist campaign. There is equally no doubt, however, that to confine the campaign to a struggle against the NF - a relatively small ultra-right group - is to seriously misjudge what is the real menace facing Black people today.



Not only does it exaggerate the importance of the NF at this stage but it leaves masses of people disarmed in the face of the real thrust of the ruling class at this moment: the legalised racism of the State as enshrined in a succession of racist immigration acts.

Racist Climate

The relative growth of the NF (which should not be exaggerated) has not, after all, fallen from the skies. It is rooted in the racist climate whipped up over the years by increasingly racist laws placed on the statute books by Tory and Labour governments.

The present Immigration Act is merely the climax of a whole series of such acts which can be traced back through Callaghan's 1968 Immigration Act, Wilson's 1965 White Paper to the Tories' original Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1962 which, for the first time, made entry into Britain dependent on a colour bar.

Such acts do not merely discriminate against Blacks coming into the country on the basis of colour. They permeate all aspects of the lives of those Blacks already here, rendering them, in effect, second class citizens.

Under their provisions, the police are empowered to arrest suspected illegal immigrants without a warrant and to deport 'trouble-makers' without right of appeal. Such powers are used by the police, as Blacks are only too aware, to intimidate & terrorise the immigrant communities from Southall to Bradford.

Logical Conclusion

The importance of these Acts cannot be overstressed. Once it is accepted that Blacks can be denied entry on the grounds of colour, and denied democratic rights in Britain on the same grounds, then racism has received official approval. All the Race Relations Acts in the world cannot change that.

It is the climate of racism created by such acts - which suggest that Blacks are somehow to blame for high unemployment or poor housing - which the NF feeds off. All the NF has done, after all, is to push the 'logic' implicit in such acts to a conclusion by suggesting that Blacks should not only be denied entry but should be forcibly expelled.

It is no wonder that Labour leaders find it quite impossible to argue against the immigration policies of the Tories or the NF. How can they when, by implementing racist laws themselves, they implicitly accept that Blacks are a 'problem'?

Diversion

The concentration by the ANL on the NF 'threat' is, in this sense, a serious error. Concentrating exclusively on a small, ultra-right group has meant downplaying the issue of legalised racism which is the main thrust of the ruling class today.

This is the reason why certain forces, who hold racist views, were able in the initial stages to support the ANL.

The Federation of Conservative Students for example (which split from the ANL in September) was only too happy to join in the anti-Nazi 'rhetoric'. It was only too happy to do so because it allowed them to hide their racist position on immigration behind a smokescreen of liberal demagoguery.

Some of the very forces who have stood on ANL platforms denouncing the NF for racism (i.e. Sid Bidwell) have been those who have called for tighter immigration curbs against Black people, who have called for cutting back on dependents and for introducing pass laws for Blacks in this country.

Splits ?

It has been argued, of course, that to raise the issue of racist immigration laws in the ANL would only lead to quarrels & internal dissension. This is partially true. It has already led to the split off of the Federation of Conservative Students when the Thatcher proposals on immigration came in for criticism earlier this year.

Raising the issue of immigration may have alienated these forces

Campaign Against the Immigration Laws

The recent publicity given in the media to Asian women subjected to 'virginity tests' at Heathrow airport has once more high-lighted the racist nature of the 1971 Immigration Act. Such violation of human rights has been passed off as 'isolated incidents'.

In fact, they are only one aspect of an Act which reduces Blacks trying to enter Britain to second-class citizens. Discriminated against on entry on the basis of colour, those few who do manage to get through immigration controls can be arrested without a warrant & deported without right of appeal.

Recognising the importance of building opposition to an Act which legalises racism in Britain, the formation of CAIL* is a welcome step forward. It has the potential, though small, of winning wide layers into a real struggle for Black rights. If it moves out boldly, it could provide a concrete political perspective for the thousands of radical youth and Blacks who have been attracted to the anti-racist activity of the ANL.

A campaign drawing on such forces could see its focal point as fighting, within the labour movement, for the Labour government to implement the 1976 Labour Party decision to repeal the Act.

* All those interested in supporting CAIL (Campaign Against Immigration Laws) or finding out more about it should contact: Box 133, c/o Rising Free, 182, Upper Street, London N. 1.

but would it have alienated those thousands of young people who supported the ANL, the young 'punk' youth and Blacks who responded so magnificently to its appeals?

Moreover, such a stance would not have alienated it from the Labour movement where it should have sought support. In 1976, the Labour Party conference passed a resolution against the government calling for the repeal of the 1971 Immigration Act. Taking up this issue would have allowed the ANL to gain the support of Labour activists in a joint campaign to implement the democratic decision of the Labour Party and to challenge the policies of the Labour leaders (instead of letting them off the hook).

Such an orientation would have meant a fight to win the Labour movement to a clear anti-racist stance by challenging head-on the right of its 'leaders' to implement racist laws. It is, after all, utopian to think that a fascist menace can be stopped if we cannot even get the labour movement to put its own house in order.

Perspective

Despite the confused orientation of the ANL, it has won thousands of young people into anti-racist action. What now remains to be done is to give that enthusiasm a sharp focus by increasingly centering the campaign around the need to repeal racist immigration laws.

by: Bob Swart

SOCIALIST ACTION

EDITOR: Michael Hawley

DISTRIBUTION MANAGER: Anne Williams

BUSINESS MANAGER: Dave Macleod

Published by SOCIALIST ACTION, 58 Auckland Rd., SE 19

Printed by Spider Web Offset (TU), 9 Rosemont Road, NW3.
(phone: 01-794 6575)

EDITORIAL :**The L.S.A.
and the Fourth International**

At its conference late last year, one of the central areas of discussion was the relation of the LSA to the Fourth International. This was not an abstract debate. Since its inception, the LSA has always had an internationalist perspective, publically identifying with both the programme & traditions of the FI.

The LSA has always rejected the 'insularity' prevalent among wide layers of the British left who see the task of building a mass revolutionary party in national terms.

While identifying with the FI, however, the LSA had many differences with the IMG (its British section) which seemed to reflect a different method & approach to the building of such a party. These differences extended from an orientation to the Labour Party to an evaluation of the Women's Liberation Movement.

Agreement

Over the past period, however, the LSA has considered that the differences between the two organisations were decreasing. There seemed to be growing agreement on the nature of the Transitional Programme and its tactical application in Britain. This seemed to be reflected in a common recognition of, for example,

- * the need to build a class struggle left-wing in the labour movement, around democratic and transitional demands, as a central task;
- * the need to see the struggle for women's liberation as a key aspect of the fight for socialism;
- * the need to elaborate a programme for youth and set up a youth organisation capable of drawing thousands of rebel youth into anti-capitalist struggle;
- * the need to combat racism both by supporting Black Power & fighting, within the broader labour movement, against racist Immigration Acts;
- * the need to defend the right of the Irish, Scottish and Welsh people to self-determination (by building, particularly in the case of Ireland, a mass Troops Out Movement);

There has also been a common approach to newer issues thrown up by the class struggle, such as Ecology (particularly on the nuclear power question) and the struggle for Gay rights.

Democracy

The LSA believes that the growing political agreement has been paralleled by agreement around the nature of the revolutionary party. The IMG's attempt to create an internal democratic atmosphere - combined with unity in action in the class struggle - is a correct understanding of 'democratic centralism' and corresponds with what the LSA has always tried to practice.

The LSA considers that the tradition the IMG is trying to establish is an object lesson to the left on the application of Leninist party building. Allowing for common programmatic agreement, tactical differences should be comradely debated out without the need for splits or expulsions which have helped cause the present 'fragmentation' of the left.

It is only by fighting for a true concept of democratic centralism that this fragmentation can begin to be overcome and the foundations laid for the building of a mass revolutionary party.

Differences

This is not to say, of course, that tactical differences do not still exist. The LSA, while supporting the IMG's non-sectarian attitude to regroupment of the left, would not necessarily agree that the tactic of 'Socialist Unity' is the best way of accomplishing this task.

Moreover, such a move could be seen as cutting across a serious orientation towards the Labour Party which will increasingly become the focal point for opposition to Callaghan's pro-capitalist policies in the period ahead.

Nevertheless, the LSA is convinced that the programmatic agreement between the two groups - and the coming together on many tactical issues - means that remaining differences could be debated out in a comradely fashion within a common organisation.

Potential

The LSA believes that the possibilities opening up for Trotskyism in Britain - and internationally - are greater than ever before. The wide-scale radicalisation of the 60s has, more recently, been given a central thrust by the deepening struggles in the labour movement which have drawn thousands into conflict with their reformist leaders.

Moreover, the Communist Party is unable to 'take advantage' of the situation since it has become rent with internal divisions stemming from the contradictions facing Stalinism as a world movement.

The possibility for building a pole of attraction to the left of the reformist and Stalinist organisations is clearly posed. Overcoming the fragmentation on the left - by regrouping those forces who share a common programme - is the first step in this direction. It is for this reason that the LSA has written to the IMG for discussions on the possibility of fusing the two organisations.

**WHY SOCIALISTS SUPPORT THE
LABOUR PARTY**

What attitudes should relatively small groups of revolutionary socialists take towards reformist and bureaucratically-run mass workers parties, such as the British Labour Party? This has been one of the major questions facing socialists this century. The SWP, for instance, holds that it is completely wrong to offer support to Labour. They view Labour and Tory as being essentially the same in practice. The SWP run in elections against the Labour Party and pose as a clear alternative to it.

This current line stands in sharp contrast to positions socialists have taken on this question at various times in the past. It also stands completely opposed to the ideas of Lenin. Lenin's attitude towards parties such as Labour, and the question of participating in elections, were clearly set out in his classic "Left-Wing Communism: An Infantile Disorder." We believe these ideas continue to provide a clear compass for revolutionaries today.

Lenin's ideas are outlined in the following article by Ian Angus. This article was originally part of a series published last year in the Canadian Socialist paper 'Labour Challenge'.

Many of the British supporters

of the Russian Revolution took a sectarian attitude to the British Labour Party and elections. Angus points out that it was only the intervention of the leaders of the Third International, particularly Lenin, which brought unity to the warring factions of British Communism and won the majority away from their ultra-radical and sectarian policies.

The British CP made zig-zags and took many wrong positions because of its political immaturity. Again, largely due to Lenin, the party corrected its course and, as a result, increased its size and influence. They were beginning to provide a real challenge to the status-quo policies of the Labour leaders.

Unfortunately the party was unable to benefit for long from the clarification Lenin helped achieve. The bureaucratisation of the Soviet state, culminating in the consolidation of the Stalin-led ruling clique after Lenin's death, led to the degeneration of the world communist movement. The various parties became pawns in Stalin's foreign policy deals. As a result the CPGB, for instance, helped the Labour Party and top trade union leaders betray the 1926 General Strike.

The Communists who oppose any support to the Labour Party were quite aware that Lenin disagreed with them. The Communist International, under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky, was profoundly different from what it became under Stalin's control. Where Stalin insisted that the Communist parties obey his instructions without question, Lenin and Trotsky wanted to build an International of intelligent, thinking revolutionaries. These men and women were not to be dictated to -- if they were wrong, they would have to be convinced.

As William Paul said at the founding convention of the CPGB: "There is no one in this audience to whom I yield in admiration for Lenin, but as we said yesterday, Lenin is no pope or god.... On local circumstances, where we are on the spot, we are the people to decide."

The local Communist leaders were the people on the spot - but that did not mean that their decisions would be correct. Many of them were inexperienced; others had been misled by involvement in sectarian or opportunist parties. The Bolsheviks had gathered the most dedicated militants into a new International. Now they faced the far more difficult task of educating these militants in the art of revolutionary politics.

What was at stake was not just a difference over affiliation to the Labour Party, but a much more



important question: What kind of party would the Communist Party be?

J.T. Murphy, a former leader of the Socialist Labour Party, expressed the essence of the question in his account of his experiences at the Second Congress of the International, held in Moscow from July 23 to August 7, 1920:

"My experience in Russia... had shown me the real meaning of the struggle for political power. Instead of thinking that a Socialist Party was merely a propaganda organisation for the dissemination

THE PARTY

of Socialist views, I now saw that a real Socialist Party would consist of revolutionary socialists who regard the party as a means whereby they would lead the working class in the fight for political power."

From that point of view, it could be seen that much of the discussion on the Labour Party had taken place in the wrong context entirely. The central question was not what opinion Communists held on the Labour Party, nor whether it, by itself, was a good policy. The question was: How were communists going to win a hearing from millions of workers who were loyal to the Labour Party despite its programme and leadership.

A group that sought only to make propaganda for socialism could ignore the question, but a group that seriously sought to win mass support had to put it at the top of the agenda.

Left-Wing Communism

Lenin sought to win the British (and the rest of the International) to this point of view in his pamphlet "Left-Wing Communism: An Infantile Disorder," first published in June 1920. In it he polemicized against sectarian and ultra-left policies that were coming to the fore in many countries, most notably in Germany and Britain. The section on Britain, focusing on the Labour Party, remains a basic text on the Marxist approach to parties of this type.

The key point in the pamphlet - Lenin stated it over and over again - was later summed up in the slogan of the Third Congress of the Third International: "To The Masses."

"If you want to help the 'masses' and to win the sympathy and support of the 'masses', you must not fear difficulties, you must not fear the pinpricks, chicanery, insults and persecution on the part of the 'leaders'.... but absolutely must work wherever the masses are to be found. You must be capable of every sacrifice, of overcoming the greatest obstacles in order to carry on agitation and propaganda systematically, perseveringly, persistently and patiently in those institutions, societies and associations - even the most ultra-reactionary - in which proletarian or semi-proletarian masses are to be found."

The parties of the International, Lenin wrote, should learn from the history of the Bolshevik Party, which won the allegiance of the Russian working class precisely because it learned "how to work legally in the most reactionary parliaments, in the most reactionary trade unions, cooperative societies, and similar organisations."

"For the whole task of the Communist is to be able to convince the backward elements, to work among them, and not to fence themselves off from them by artificial and childish 'Left' slogans."



Lenin urged British Socialists to support the Labour Party in order to expose it.

The Communists are convinced that Parliament and the Labour Party are institutions that only hinder the fight for socialism - but the vast majority of workers don't agree, Lenin wrote. And the workers will not give up their faith in these institutions just because the Communists propagandise against them: "Revolution is impossible without a change in the views of the majority of the working class, and this change is brought about by the political experience of the masses, and never by propaganda alone."

The Communists know that the Labour Party, in power, will inevitably betray the faith that the workers have in it. The task of the Communists, then, is to hasten the day when the workers of Britain learn this, through their own experiences:

"If we are the party of the revolutionary class, and not a revolutionary group, if we want the masses, to follow us (and unless we do, we stand the risk of remaining mere windbags), we must first, help Henderson or Snowden (Labour leaders) to beat Lloyd George and Churchill...; secondly, we must help the majority of the working class to convince themselves by their own experiences that we are right, that is, that the Henderson's and Snowden's are absolutely unsuitable...; thirdly, we must bring nearer the moment when, on the basis of the disappointment of the majority of the workers with the Henderson's, it will be possible with serious chances of success to overthrow the government of the Henderson's at once..."

Tactical Proposals

In "Left-Wing Communism" Lenin made concrete proposals for British Communist tactics toward the Labour Party. The British Communists, he suggested, should propose an electoral alliance with the Labour Party - an agreement not to oppose each other's candidates, with each party having full freedom to put forward its own programme.

If the Labour Party agreed, then the Communists would gain a wider hearing among workers sympathetic to the Labour Party and would be able to hasten the day when the Labour Party leaders demonstrated their political treachery in office.

If the Labour leaders rejected an alliance, then too the Communists would gain, by demonstrating

to the masses in practice that the Labour leaders prefer their close relations with the capitalists to unity of all workers.

If Labour refused an electoral alliance, Lenin suggested, the Communists should run candidates only in constituencies where their candidacy would not cause defeat of a Labour candidate.

"We would take part in the election campaign, distribute leaflets in favour of communism, and in all constituencies where we have no candidates, we would urge the electors to vote for the Labour candidate against the bourgeois candidate."

By following this approach Lenin argued, the Communists would be able to gain a hearing from workers who supported the Labour Party. They would gain the opportunity to explain to these workers what Communists think is

wrong with the Labour Party and its programme. The revolutionaries would, in effect, be saying to the British working class: "You believe that the Labour Party can satisfy your needs - we disagree, and here's why. Let's work together to put Labour in power and then we'll see which of us is right."

The Communist Party ought, Lenin said in a conversation with CPGB leader William Paul, to issue "an official manifesto in every constituency.... urging the workers to vote for the Labour Party in order to prove that the Henderson's, Thomases, MacDonald's and Snowden's, could not solve the manifold problems confronting society through the parliamentary machine.

"In a word, the Communist Party in Britain ought to assist the Labour Party to demonstrate its own futility."

Education for Socialists:

INTERNATIONALISM

During the past few weeks, capitalist regimes in one country after another have been shaken by massive protests. Demonstrations in Iran have involved millions of people, and have continued in the face of machine-gun fire from the Shah's army. In Nicaragua, a virtual civil war between the workers & dictator Anastasio Somoza's National Guard has erupted in a number of major cities. In Peru, the military regime is desperately trying to contain the strikes and massive radicalisation that have deepened since the installation of the Constituent Assembly there.

The class struggle has raised the possibility of the downfall of hated dictatorships in Iran, Nicaragua and Peru.

The British (and U.S.) ruling class know from bitter experience that the struggle for democratic rights in colonial countries tends to grow over into a movement for socialism. Both Washington and London are committed to preserving capitalist rule wherever it exists. The Vietnam war was a lesson in what this commitment can lead to.

British workers have a vital stake in every major eruption in the class struggle around the world. We, in Britain, have no choice but to be internationalists.

What does internationalism mean?

James P. Cannon, the founder of the Socialist Workers Party in the United States, explained in a speech in 1943:

"Internationalism was not a dogma invented by Marx and Engels, but a recognition of the reality of the modern world. It proceeds from the fact that the economy of modern society is a world unit requiring international cooperation and division of labor for the further development of the productive forces.

"The class struggle arising from the class division between workers and exploiters within the countries requires class unity of the workers on an international scale. From the beginning, the program of scientific socialism has called for the international collaboration of the workers and oppressed peoples in the different countries..

"Just as the petty states and principalities and arbitrarily divided sections of the old countries under feudalism had to give way to the consolidated, centralized national states in order to create a broader arena for the development of the productive forces, so, in the same way, the artificially divided national states have to give way to the federation of states.

"In the future course of development this must lead eventually to a world federation operating world economy as a whole without class and nationalistic divisions. From this it follows irrevocably that such an order can be created only by the international collaboration and the joint struggle of the workers in the various countries against their own bourgeoisie at home and against capitalism as a world system. So preached and so practiced their great continuators, Lenin and Trotsky..

"Even the bourgeoisie recognise internationalism in their own way. The bankruptcy of national limitedness has become so clear to the bourgeoisie that all their most perspicacious leaders have been compelled to renounce the idea of national isolation altogether. Isolationism as a political tendency stands discredited in bourgeois politics." (From "The End of the Comintern and the Prospects for Labor Internationalism," in Speeches for Socialism.)

Of course, when capitalist politicians today denounce "isolationism", they are referring to the progressive opposition of the American people to any more Vietnam-style adventures. Capitalist internationalism results in financial aid, troops, and bombers being sent to help reactionary dictators in every corner of the world.

But the internationalism of the workers movement, more relevant today than ever, is summed up in the slogans:

Solidarity with the peoples of Iran, Nicaragua, and Peru;

No U.S. troops, no U.S. arms, no U.S. aid for the dictators.

Article by David Frankel, which first appeared in The Militant (USA) on 22nd September 1978.

WINDSCALE & DEMOCRACY

by
Anne Williams

In April last year, a demonstration of over 3000 mobilised in central London against the siting of a nuclear re-processing plant at Windscale. The demonstration - called by Friends of the Earth - shows the mounting concern at the spread of nuclear energy programmes which has already seen mass opposition develop in countries from Australia to France.

Such concern is no accident. Windscale symbolises the fears for a future geared to a 'plutonium' economy, fast-breeder reactors and all the attendant radiation hazards.

Dangers

Radio-biologists & ecologists who opposed Windscale at the Public Inquiry headed by Justice Parker, pointed out the lethal dangers contained in such fast-breeder reactors. Since the first accident in Idaho in 1961, when the top of a reactor blew killing three US GIs, there have been a further 2,000 recorded accidents through a failure of the cooling system, partial 'meltdowns' and radiation leaks.

These accidents were 'minor'. One scientist recalled the US Atomic Energy Commission Report as early as 1957 which predicted that in a really serious explosion, over 50,000 people would be effected by radiation sickness. 4,000 would die instantly and an increasing incidence of cancer would develop over the next 10 years, leading to another 45,000 deaths.

The Atomic Energy Commission was talking of explosions of 1000 megawatts capacity. Windscale is proposed as 1300 megawatts.

Waste

It is not just danger from major accidents which makes these re-processing plants a potential time bomb. Scientists at the Inquiry gave evidence that normal working would dramatically increase cancer risks among employees. As Dr Alice Stewart reported, a 26% increase in cancer had been detected among workers at the Hanford Atomic Energy Works in

Washington State.

More important still, the disposal of atomic waste creates even bigger problems. It has been estimated that the annual waste from a re-processing plant like Windscale is 1000 times the radioactivity of the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima.

While Justice Parker accepted that Windscale would mean more "discharge into the sea and atmosphere, more material for burial at Driggs, more dumping in the deep oceans, and more storage of highly active waste", he thought such problems could be solved.

As some scientists have pointed out, however, some forms of this waste remain radioactive for up to half a million years. Creating greater storage dumps of lethal material creates a huge risk since what would happen if natural accidents 'disturbed' the nuclear graves?

Motive

The obvious question is - why should capitalist governments be so intent on introducing an energy source which poses such a threat to human life & the environment? The answer, of course, is simple: profit.

Having squandered many of the earth's fossil fuels - such as oil, natural gas and coal - they are now desperately seeking alternative fuel sources. Other energy forms such as solar & wind power, geothermal & tidal power, which

offer the prospect of a safe & clean environment, are ignored by them because they offer no immediate return on investment.

What this shows most clearly is the increasingly irrational and destructive nature of capitalism which - in its search for profits - is literally willing to build controlled A-bombs in our midst.

Democracy

In order to push ahead with their programme, they are forced to 'hush up', as far as possible, the attendant risks. The accidents already associated with nuclear plants are kept under lock and key and when they are raised - as at the Windscale public inquiry - ignored. The scientists and ecologists who gave evidence there noted the clear bias of Justice Parker in collecting material & declared support for a policy of civil disobedience.

Such contempt for democracy will dramatically increase if a nuclear energy programme goes ahead. The NCCL has already pointed out that to 'protect' the plutonium a massive police surveillance will be needed not only on workers in the plants but also on those involved in shipping and transporting it.

Preventative measures would also be needed to keep information about it secret. These would include greater press censorship to supplement 'D' notices and increasing use of the Official Secrets Act. The use of these laws

already applies to workers employed in nuclear power plants who are thereby denied all protection under the Health & Safety Act and who can be prosecuted for strike action.

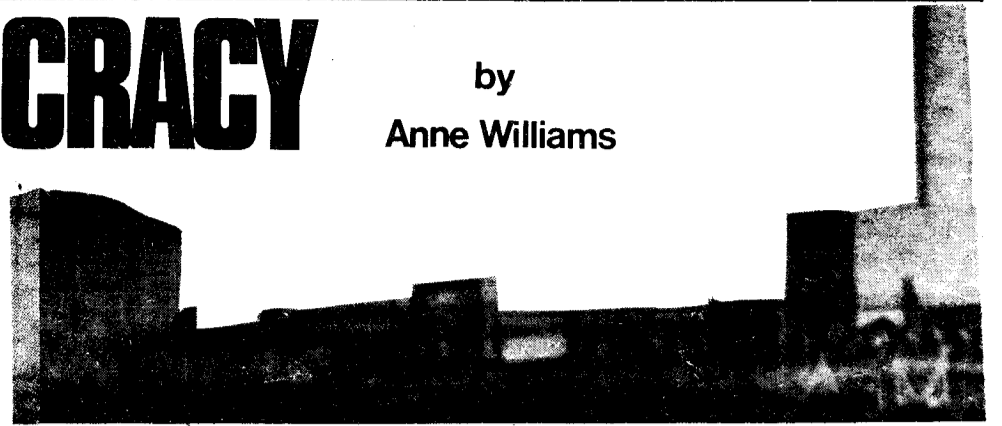
Campaign

It is for these reasons that the opposition growing up to Windscale (like that internationally) is anti-capitalist and should be supported by socialists. Such opposition is reacting to the irrational nature of a system which, having squandered the earth's resources, is now unleashing a destructive timebomb in their thirst for profits.

It is quite clear that alternatives to nuclear energy are, with today's technology, quite feasible. By husbanding existing resources & researching into alternative energy sources, a safe and clean environment can be assured.

It is clear, however, that this can only be achieved by removing the present irrational system and creating a planned, rational economy which places human need before profit to a select few. A system in which co-operation replaces competition; in which homes, hospitals and schools are given priority rather than nuclear death-traps like Windscale.

The building of a mass-action campaign against the spread of nuclear energy plants is a key issue today. Such a campaign should fight within the labour movement to win its leaders to oppose all forms of nuclear energy.



Teachers

BUILDING THE S.T.A.

Interview with DAVE PICTON, ex-editor of Socialist Teacher, who ran as the united left candidate for Treasurer of the N. U. T. this year.

Q. There are 45,000 teachers unemployed at present. What action do you think should be taken to remedy this situation?

A. The key question relating to unemployment is class size, and teachers would be particularly ready to respond to a call for action against oversize classes because they know all pupils would benefit from such a move.

The union leaders should be forced to instruct members to refuse to teach any class over 30 (a target which, in itself, would require employing an additional 55,000 teachers) and to make it clear to the employers that, if necessary, it would give full support - including strike pay - to any members suspended for so doing.

Q. NUT leaders have recently put in a wage claim for 36.5%. What should be the attitude of the left?

A. To restore teachers' salaries to their 1975 value would - as the NUT leaders claim - require an average increase of about 35%. The NUT leaders pin their faith in being treated as a 'special case', however, as we were at the time of

Houghton. What they refuse to recognise is that the Houghton award was a response to several years of militancy among teachers on wages, and that they themselves, have done their best to destroy that militancy over the years by destroying the autonomy of the local branches.

There is no doubt that the NUT claim, which is far in excess of the government's 5% norm, will be supported by wide layers in the union and that the leaders will be under some pressure to take action in its support. The recent actions by other public sector workers will undoubtedly act as a stimulant to many teachers who have seen their wages eroded over the last few years.

The task of the left in the union will be to make that pressure as great as possible and to try and win the widest support against any back-downs. Fighting at the same time for a cost of living clause inbuilt into any settlement could help to offset inflation and ensure that wages are not eroded as occurred after the Houghton award.



Dave Picton

Q. How important do you think the recent debate on racism in the union has been and what has been the reaction of the NUT leaders?

The NUT leaders have sought to restrict this debate to matters of school curriculum and organisation. While important, they have refused however to back any demonstrations against racism, to oppose racist immigration Acts or to make NF membership incompatible with membership of the union.

One of the tasks of the left must be to make the union's conference decisions, which are anti-racist on paper, a practical reality by pioneering mobilisations against racism. The left has made a start here and the Executive's decision banning branches from affiliating to the ANL has been hotly contested in many areas.

Q. Has the left pioneered the role of women in the union?

A. The STA, in particular, has played a major role in raising many issues relating to the status of women in education, and in society generally. The fight on abortion and the right of women to choose, has been a major issue which has been hotly debated at the last few conferences. The leadership, of course, frightened of the union taking positions on broader social issues, have opposed supporting this question and affiliating to NAC.

Q. What should the STA be concentrating on in the period ahead?

A. On numerous issues, S. T. A. members are now beginning to see the need to mobilise much wider layers of teachers in struggles that are of immediate concern to them. Wages, class size, opposition to closures, and the issues of racism and women's rights are, I think, central.

I think the STA should focus its activity around these concrete questions in the coming year and, I believe, the political climate is changing in a way that will allow a strong response from teachers to demands that are formulated in a clear, coherent way.

Mobilising support on these issues should begin to lay the basis for a solid class-struggle opposition in the union to oppose the present leaders of the NUT and TUC.

CRISIS IN THE N.H.S.

by: Terry Viney

The Failure of Labour's Policies

Over the past two months we have experienced the usual barrage of propaganda against workers involved in industrial action. Taking the brunt of this assault have been the hospital workers, who like many employees in the service industries, are most vulnerably placed for such attacks.

David Ennals, Secretary for the Social Services, fired the first shots:

"I appeal to those who are taking industrial action, for God's sake suspend it... They can no longer take it out on the patients. There is no doubt some people have already died."

Now that the dispute has been settled, it is timely to ask ourselves about the extent of concern Ennals and the Labour leaders in general have shown for the state of our National Health Service over the past few years and whether the Tory press have ever felt the need to expose its shortcomings at times other than during industrial action.

Government Cuts

As chance would have it we don't have to look very far for the answers. Just two days after Ennals' appeal to the hospital workers the annual report of the DHSS was published. The report showed that in certain areas converted shops, with their windows boarded up and their ceilings leaking, were being used as doctors' surgeries, and that in industrial cities like Liverpool, for example, where rates of illness and death are significantly above the national average, the provision of doctors is at its most meagre. Such is Ennals' real concern for the sick.

The solution proposed in the DHSS Report is alarming. In order to provide additional health clinics to cover the gaps in primary care, expenditure on the hospital service will have to be diverted. Such a proposition totally ignores the fundamental causes of the "sick-



ness" within the NHS. Five years ago under the Barber cuts, the Conservative government reduced capital expenditure on the NHS by £111 millions. This is not very surprising. The Tories never cared much for public spending. A year later, however, Wilson's government came to power. The Labour leaders promised radical measures after a barren period of the Tories in office. In fact, they did nothing to restore the NHS budget. Instead, in 1976, the Labour government cut the NHS bill by a further £75 millions. As a result queues for hospital treatment have lengthened dramatically, and reports of people dying while on the waiting list have become increasingly widespread.

Private Sector Benefits

However, one of the key problems

for the NHS is not necessarily the shortage of public money, but the way so much of this money is used by government for the benefit of private drug companies, private health insurance schemes, and private medical practice.

La Roche is a Swiss drug firm with annual profits around £150-£200 millions. Last month we learned that the government is to give the firm £45 million to build a new factory in Scotland. Roche are experienced exploiters of the NHS. With their products Valium and Librium, which they produced at £20 per kilo, they were able to make sales to the NHS at £1,962 per kilo for some years. In 1970 the NHS was paying out £10,000 a day just for Roche tranquillisers. As a result drug companies consistently produce a higher rate of profit than any other manufacturing industry.

Money also flows freely to private health insurance schemes such as BUPA and Private Patients Plan. The function of such organizations is to enable some individuals to jump the long queues for hospital treatment.

Private Practice Thrives

Badly needed money is also diverted out of the NHS and into private hands by the way doctors are employed by the state and the attractive opportunities they allowed for private work. The BMA resisted the attempt to put doctors in the employ of the NHS. Instead the government agreed to preserve their freelance status. As a result doctors are able to set up practices to their own convenience at the expense of the needs of the population. The areas offering greatest opportunities for an additional private income, (the south and the city suburbs) are relatively well supplied. Working class areas are correspondingly under-subscribed. This leads to the kind of disequilibrium brought out starkly in the DHSS report.

The independence enjoyed by doctors brings other problems, especially in the field of advertising. Each year £32 million is spent on advertising drugs. Included in this cost is the £10 million a year paid out to drug industry representatives who make the rounds of surgeries, hospitals and medical schools.

The Real Problems

Fantastic fortunes are being made out of our health. While the NHS is ailing - unable to meet people's essential needs - the drug firms, the insurance companies, the advertising industry and private consultants are all thriving. These are the fundamental problems the DHSS refuses to deal with. These are the kind of issues which do not find their way into the front page headlines of the Daily Mail and the Daily Express. But they do help to explain more clearly why the industrial action taken by the hospital workers last month has been only one of a series of dis-

what we stand for

It is becoming daily more apparent that the leaders of the labour movement offer policies not in the interests of working people but of capitalism.

The LSA sees as the central task today the building, in the unions & Labour Party, of a broad class-struggle, left-wing against the pro-capitalist policies of these leaders.

The struggle for such an alternative programme, based on the method of the Transitional Programme, should incorporate the following points:

1) The fight for socialism is international. Concretely, this means giving full support to national liberation movements (particularly in N. Ireland) by mobilising the widest possible support around the right to self-determination.

2) The struggle for socialism is not merely 'economic'. It seeks to unite all the exploited & oppressed against capitalism. Concretely, this means giving full support to the Black, Women's and Gay movements fighting for their liberation. Building mass actions - & winning support for them in the labour movement - is key to uniting workers and convincing the doubly oppressed that socialism has answers to their problems.

3) The struggle for socialism is inseparable from that to defend and extend democratic rights. Socialism as a system has to be infinitely more democratic than what exists in the West today. It is for this reason that socialists give full support to the struggle for socialist democracy in the deformed and degenerated workers states in the USSR, Eastern Europe & China.

The LSA is convinced that the present fragmentation of the left is a 'handicap' to achieving these aims. It therefore seeks to obtain as much unity as possible by supporting united-front campaigns on concrete objectives. At the same time, the LSA encourages regroupment of the left on clear programmatic positions.

puts at our hospitals. Waiting lists have grown because our health has never been taken too seriously by successive governments, who are more concerned to protect the interests of private companies like Roche rather than provide a fully viable NHS.

Need for Mass Campaigns

The record of this government over the last few years demonstrates the unwillingness and the inability of the Labour leaders to support such a viable health service. It is therefore essential to build a mass campaign challenging the leadership of the Labour Party to improve the NHS. Such a campaign should be organized around the demand: "No to Hospital Closures". Implied logically within such a campaign would be the further demands for "The Nationalization of the Drug Companies", and "The Abolition of Private Medicine". Only by raising such issues in the Labour movement will wide layers of working people dissatisfied with a deteriorating health service, face up to the limitations of their own Labour government and see the need for socialist policies.

GAYS UNDER ATTACK

The Labour government has once again shown its concern for gay rights by delaying the reform of anti-gay laws in Northern Ireland. The Homosexual Draft Order, a measure to bring the laws of Ulster into line with that of England and Wales, was an attempt to answer the appeal made by the Northern Ireland Gay Rights Association to the European Commission of Human Rights.

However the prospect of having too few friends in the House of Commons is too much for Callaghan, and the measure has been shelved in order to keep the government in office. In an effort to get the backing of the seven official Unionists, the gay law reform has been dropped like a hot potato.

As all forms of homosexual activity in Northern Ireland are at present illegal, any measure to 'liberalise' the law would be an important step forward for the gay community in Ulster. It would also represent a significant victory in response to the recent attacks on

the gay rights movement in Britain, - from the attacks on Maureen Colquhoun MP; the Gay News prosecution, to the present victimisation of Frank Kelly.

However bringing Ulster law into line with that of England and Wales is not enough by itself, since legislation on the mainland represents at best a liberal tolerance of homosexuality, providing you are over 21 and do it in private. In Scotland, as in Northern Ireland, all sexual acts between men are outlawed. Although three gays have recently taken the UK government to the European Court of Human Rights over the archaic Scottish laws, Strasbourg alone cannot solve the problem.

But anti-gay attacks will continue, and more often than not with the complicity of the Labour government. The tasks ahead must be to build specific campaigns within the Labour Party, the trade unions, as well as outside the Labour movement in defence of gay rights.

Dru Benson

BUILD A LEFT WING IN NUPE

For months, NUPE leader Alan Fisher - and his counterparts in the T&GWU and GMWU - tried to keep the lid on the mounting protest among public sector workers fed up with low pay and crumbling social services.

Under mass pressure from their members, they finally declared selective stoppages in support of the £60 minimum wage and 35 hour week claim. Such action was not intended, however, to win a decisive victory for the low-paid, but to allow Fisher and Basnett to gain a few concessions from Jim Callaghan, whose policies they generally accept.

This is why both were willing to join in the chorus of condemnation from government figures to the Tory press, against rank-and-file workers taking unofficial action, as in the case of ambulancedrivers.

Anger

The fruits of this strategy were revealed in the recent deal establishing a 9% increase with a promise of a comparability study later in the year. Falling far short of the original claim, it was sold to members on the basis that the government had 'scraped the barrel dry' and that further action could lead to redundancies and further cuts in the social services.

The initial reaction by many NUPE & GMWU workers - who had been urging all-out action - was one of confusion and anger. The London Divisional Council of the GMWU, composed of shop stewards representing 150,000 workers, rejected the deal outright. Around the country, there were protest actions in which ancillary workers walked out in disgust, as in Salford or Manchester.

The union leaders astutely calculated, however, that many workers, - seeing the selective strikes as ineffective and beginning to feel the financial 'pinch' - would be

drawn towards a settlement that would isolate the more militant areas and leave them little alternative but to drift back to work. This is precisely what happened.



Lessons

The acceptance of the deal does not, in this sense, reflect lack of militancy among NUPE or GMWU members who forced their leaders to declare action which, in itself, broke the back of the government's 5% norm. It reflects the fact that they could see no alternative for winning their claim.

The key question for militants in the public sector is to learn the lessons from the strike to ensure such set-backs don't happen again. The first weakness, as many were aware, was the union leaders' insistence on limiting action to selective strikes which were totally inadequate for dealing with a government intent on making the low-paid a test case for its wage freeze policies. Only an all-out stoppage would have had an impact.

The second weakness was the union leaders' determination to present the claim as a 'special case', thereby dividing the struggles of

the low-paid and weakening their impact. What was needed was united action by all public sector workers in a common front.

Weakness

Many militants are, of course, only too aware of these weaknesses and called for an all-out strike. What needs to be more clearly stressed, however, is the reason why the union leaders were unwilling to call such action.

Despite the militant speeches of Basnett and Fisher, both of them essentially support the policies of the present Labour government. Both recently, for example, signed the Concordat, whose thrust is to support wage limits by curbing rank and file democracy. Accepting the need to curb pay, they were therefore forced into a position where they tried to curb rather than champion the demands of their own members.

At no stage did they seek to challenge head-on Callaghan's pro-capitalist policies. When the government said it had scraped the kitty dry, they didn't question its intent of paying a 25% increase to soldiers. They didn't call for a drastic cut in defence spending in order to boost the public sector and public sector workers wages.

Alternative

It is quite clear that a fight for decent wages and jobs - not to speak of defending the social services - cannot be won by the existing leaders who accept the anti-capitalist policies of the present Labour government. The real lesson of the present strike is the need to fight for clear alternative policies to those of Basnett and Fisher which will provide a real channel for the discontent and militancy of millions of workers.

CAN (Campaign for Action in NUPE) was set up by militants to fight for such alternative policies and to demand greater democracy

CAN Policies

* For action to win the pay claim, no retreat on conference policy. For a £60 minimum wage and opposition to all forms of wage freeze. For automatic increases in wages to compensate for the effects of inflation.

For a 35-hour week with no loss of pay.

* No cuts in staffing at any level, no cover of unfilled vacancies. Defend jobs and services by national strike action against the cuts. No to the cash limits system.

* For full union democracy. For 100% union membership and for monthly branch meetings in work time. For the regular election of shop stewards for each section/dept at sectional/dept meetings.

* Unity of the union against all attacks on Black people. Stop all deportations of hospital workers through the work permit system. Opposition to all racist immigration controls. Campaign against fascists holding positions in the union.

* For the full development of women in the union. For the implementation of the demands of the Working Women's Charter, notably on maternity leave & nurseries. For creche facilities at branch, district, area and at national meetings.

within the union. Although CAN is a new organisation whose policies are unclear in certain ways, it can provide a pivot for militants determined that the next struggles are not sold short by the union leaders.

The policies CAN advocates - if taken up and fought for boldly both in the union and in the Labour Party - can begin to pose a serious alternative to the pro-capitalist policies of the union bureaucracy and Labour Party leaders.

Richard Munro

FIGHT THE CONCORDAT (continued from page 1)

for the coming elections. It is designed to eliminate actions such as those of the low-paid, which are seen by the Labour right-wing as seriously undermining Labour's electoral credibility.

It is not however, the struggle by millions of the low-paid for a decent living which is jeopardising Labour's electoral chances. Rather it is the pro-capitalist policies that the government has pursued in the last three years, which have eroded wages and created massive unemployment.

Such policies, coupled with anti-union harangues - only serve to alienate working class support and boost the Tory claim that the unions are 'wrecking' the economy and need to be disciplined.

Callaghan's attacks on strikers only open the door to Thatcher who has been quick to claim that Labour cannot control the unions, whereas her policies, involving legal curbs on picketing, will do the trick.

Alternative

The only way to curb this drift to the right - which opens the door to the Tory wolves - is by

fighting for a clear class-struggle alternative to the policies of the Concordat. The mass strikes of the low-paid must serve as a springboard for campaigning, both in the unions and in the Labour Party, for policies which can unite the whole Labour movement in opposition to Callaghan's austerity programme.

Elements for such a programme already exist. The fight for a 35 hour week in order to tackle unemployment has - since the POEU pioneered it - become a component of most wage claims. It should be united with a demand to end all cuts in the social services and the introduction of a massive public works programme to increase the number of hospitals, homes and schools.

Similarly, most wage claims argue the case for an increase, in terms of the need to catch up with inflation during the period of the Social Contract. Why not extend this argument into a demand to protect all trade unionists by demanding that wages should be pegged to rises in the cost of living (as calculated by the Labour movement)?

Recall the Labour Party!

Such policies - allied with opposition to any attacks on the democratic rights of the unions - could begin to unite thousands of trade unionists and Labour Party activists around a common programme. The focal point of this struggle should be the recall of the TUC and Labour Party conferences.

After all, what mandate does the TUC or Callaghan have for cutting wages and boosting unemployment. Both the TUC and the Labour Party, at their last conferences, decisively threw out the 5% norm (the latter by a 2 to 1 majority). What mandate do either have to come to an agreement to curb rank-and-file democracy and to strike break? Did not the Labour movement throw out similar policies, by mass struggles, during the Wilson and Heath governments?

Demanding the recall of the Labour Party conference could begin to expose the undemocratic nature of Callaghan's policies and begin to elaborate an alternative on which to fight the coming election. Those leftwing Labour MPs who have declared their support for the wages offensive have a special responsibility in this fight which should be started now. All talk about a leftwing manifesto

which does not base itself on the real struggles opening up, and which does not confront Callaghan head-on, is merely... empty talk.

Election

Fighting for such a programme, allied with other demands in favour of Labour's allies, would do much to offset any tendencies in the union ranks, disillusioned with the Labour governments policies, to think of disaffiliating from Labour or abstaining in the coming election.

Such a trend would be disastrous. We must not leave the task of combatting right-wing Labour leaders to the Tories, who would only be returned to office on a clear union-bashing programme. The task of defeating Callaghan is the task of the Labour movement itself.

That is why campaigning for the return of a Labour government is a key issue for all socialists. Campaigning for its return is not to identify with - or have any illusions in - the Labour leaders. On the contrary, such a campaign has to be coupled with a fight for the removal of its present leadership and programme in favour of one based on the real needs of working people.

A.D.Scott

HANDS OFF VIETNAM!

by
Michael
Strange

On March 16th, Chinese officials announced they were ending their invasion of Vietnam - begun on Feb 30th - and pulling out their troops. Why did they send them in, in the first place? What repercussions will this have? Below, Mike Strange answers these questions.

On February 20th, Chinese armed forces swept into North Vietnam. The official reason for the invasion was to prevent 'border provocations' by the Vietnamese into Chinese territory.

This is a sick joke. The real reason was given by leading Chinese Stalinist Teng Hsiao-p'ing during his recent visit to Washington in order to strengthen ties with US capitalism. He made no secret of the fact that Vietnam needed to be 'punished' for its part in the overthrow of the bloody Pol Pot regime in Kampuchea.

Reaction

Talk of 'punishing' the Vietnamese did not go down amiss with China's new-found allies in Washington. Of course, the Carter regime has found it expedient to 'condemn' the invasion & call for "...the immediate withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Cambodia and Chinese troops from Vietnam", (thereby linking the two).

But Washington's attempt to strike a pose of benevolent 'neutrality' is meant entirely for public consumption. The Carter regime knew of Chinese intentions some time before and assured Teng that the 'operation' would in no way undermine the anticipated profitable trade between the two countries.

To reveal the US administration's real attitude towards the Chinese invasion, one has only to compare its calm reaction in recent days to its hysterical response in January to the war in Kampuchea. The US government stridently condemned Hanoi for aiding the Kampuchean insurgents and declared its refusal to even discuss normalising relations with Hanoi until its troops were withdrawn.

Background

Washington's unofficial 'approval' of the Chinese invasion is not accidental. Partly, of course, it stems from the pleasure at seeing growing discord among the workers states. More important, however, it fits into the long term anti-Vietnamese campaign US Imperialism has been conducting for some time now.

Ever since it was forced out of Indochina in 1972, US Imperialism has sought to economically strangle the Vietnamese revolution. It refused to accept Vietnam's modest \$4.75 billion dollars claim to repair the damage from nearly ten years barbaric bombing and

turned down any idea of 'diplomatic' relations.

This campaign intensified last year in retaliation to the series of revolutionary measures that swept away the last remnants of capitalism from South Vietnam and consolidated the whole country under a single planned economy. They obviously feared that this revolutionary impetus could set the masses in neighbouring Thailand and Kampuchea into motion.

Military Backing

Economic 'strangulation' was paralleled by attempts to militarily strengthen the brutal rightwing regime in Thailand. The New York Times (Feb. 8th) reported the Prime Minister Kriangsak Chamanand as saying that "The US has agreed to speed deliveries of tactical fighters, weapons and ammunition to Thailand in response to the continued fighting in Indochina..."

General Kriangsak was also reported as saying, in the same article, that "The US has reassured us and given us confidence that if the situation around us escalates, the US will not stand idly by".

It was not just Thailand but the bloody Pol Pot regime in Kampuchea that was also seen as a vital counter-balance against the 'spread' of the Vietnamese revolution. As the Far Eastern Economic Review (Nov. 8th) put it, the Australian government believed that "...it is essential to preserve (Kampuchea) as an independent buffer between non-communist Thailand and Communist Vietnam.

It was for this reason that every major imperialist power lined up behind the bloody Pol Pot regime during the civil war in Kampuchea last month. It is also for this reason that Thailand is now providing a refuge and base of military operations for the remnants of Pol Pot's army in its clashes with the new Kampuchean government.

China

It is only against this background of an imperialist-inspired campaign against the Vietnamese revolution that the Chinese invasion can be understood. Ever since Chairman Mao 'clinked' champagne glasses with Nixon 7 years ago, Peking has increasingly viewed the Vietnamese revolution as a 'de-stabilising' factor on its borders and an obstacle to improved economic and diplomatic

ties with Washington.

With the escalation of Imperialism's anti-Vietnam campaign last year, Peking was only too anxious to identify with its new-found friends and jump on the bandwagon.

This explains their hostility to the expropriations of the capitalists in South Vietnam, using the fact that many were of Chinese national origin to portray the measures as 'racist'. It also explains their military build-up along the Vietnamese borders and Teng's sabre-rattling in Washington during his recent visit to America.

Invasion

The fall of the Pol Pot regime last month was clearly seen as a dangerous step forward by Peking. It threatened to de-stabilise the situation in Indochina and cut across their attempts to forge ties with US Imperialism under the umbrella of 'peaceful co-existence'.

The subsequent invasion was obviously designed to help 'contain' the 'overspill' of the Vietnamese revolution and to teach Vietnam - which Teng arrogantly described as this 'Asian Cuba' - a sharp lesson.



There can be no doubt that China's invasion is not aimed at restoring capitalism in Vietnam or at offering an opening for a massive influx of Imperialist troops. Either of these would directly threaten China itself. China's aim is, quite simply, to preserve 'stability' on its borders to facilitate its dealings with Washington.

Dangers

Whatever its aims may be, however, the dangers of the invasion are acute. In the immediate sense, they lie in the support given to the rightwing Thailand regime, which may increase its military support for the remnants of Pol Pot's army still fighting on the Thai-Kampuchea border, and the rightwing guerillas fighting the Pathet Lao in Laos.

In the longer term, the danger lies in the cover China's invasion provides for Washington's manoeuvres to advance Imperialism's basic aim of rolling back the advances made by the Vietnamese revolution.

Hands Off!

Defenders of the Chinese and Vietnamese revolutions must demand that Peking unconditionally and immediately withdraw its troops from Vietnam and end its counter-revolutionary complicity. Washington's drive to roll back the revolution in South-East Asia.

Iranian Trotskyists Raise Demands

In the deepening revolutionary situation since the February insurrection, the following demands have been raised by the Iranian Hezb-e-Kargarene-e Socialist (Socialist Workers Party - Iranian Section of the Fourth International).

* For the development, extension and co-ordination of the democratic committees of the toiling masses in the factories and offices, in the armed forces and in the neighbourhoods.

The Committees should be run completely democratically, elected by the toilers and the soldiers, and with all political parties and viewpoints given equal rights.

The objective is the formation of broadly based councils or soviets of workers', soldiers', and toilers' delegates to fight for the needs, interests, and rights of the masses.

* For workers' control of the factories and offices through the workers committees. Open the books of the enterprises to the workers committees and public. Immediate expropriation of the properties of the Shah and the royal family, and of the imperialists. Expropriation of the banks, oil industry and other key branches of the economy.

* Build the alliance between the workers and peasants. Land, cheap credit, adequate machines and fertilisers, and guaranteed markets for the peasants. Access to adequate irrigation.

* Against the attempts of the capitalist government to rebuild the old army, the rank-and-file soldiers committees should elect all officers and forge links with the workers committees and armed civilians to build an armed force under the control of the soldiers and toilers committees.

* Against the attempts of the government and the Islamic Revolutionary Council to impose censorship and restrict democratic rights. The workers, soldiers and toilers committees serve as the only guarantee of the protection and extension of democracy.

* Key democratic rights that must be fought for now are freedom of religion and seperation of church and state, equal rights for women, and for the right to self-determination for the oppressed nationalities, including the Kurds, Azerbaijanis, and Baluchis.

* No imposition of a government or of a constitution from above. For immediate convocation of a freely elected, sovereign Constituent Assembly to decide these and other questions facing the masses.

* No capitalist government can meet the demands and needs of the toiling masses; the opposite is the case. For a workers and peasants republic, a government based on broad democratic councils of the workers, soldiers and toilers.

* For the defence of all the conquests of the revolution against domestic reaction and imperialism. *Workers and Toilers of the world: Come to the aid of the Iranian Revolution by demanding that the imperialists keep their hands off Iran!

Socialist Feminist Conference

On March 24/25 at City University, the 1979 Socialist Feminist annual conference will take place.

The first day will be devoted to discussing the general activities socialist feminists are involved in. This will be broken down into 4 areas: social policy, economic conditions, women's liberation, and the role of the state.

uction.

The second day will, drawing on the political ideas emerging on Saturday, be devoted to a more general discussion on socialist feminist politics. Papers should be sent to: Conference Planning Group, 27 Villa Road, London E 8 3. Registration can be done at the conference, 27 Villa Road, London, E 8.

Socialist Action

Who is behind the 'SHANKILL BUTCHERS'?

Last month, Gerald McIlwaine - along with other members of what has become known as the 'Shankill Butchers' - was jailed after being convicted on kidnapping, assault and gun charges. The 19 victims of the sectarian attacks of this loyalist gang were innocent Catholics.

Picked up at random in a black taxi driven by Moore - a member of the gang - they were taken to Protestant areas, tortured and finally butchered to death with an axe or by having their throats cut.

UDR

All the brutal aspects of these murders were brought out at the trial. What did not receive such prominence was the fact that Gerald McIlwaine, leader of the 'gang', was a member of the British army-controlled UDR (Ulster Defence Regiment).

The UDR was formed in 1970 as a replacement for the B-Specials. Like the B-Specials it has gained a widespread reputation for its violent anti-Catholic bigotry. Unlike the B-Specials, however, it is part of - and under the control of - the British army.

Involvement by British-controlled UDR individuals in such sectarian violence is not new. As last month's Irish Times put it: "Scores of UDR members and ex-members have appeared in court on serious charges and have been found guilty of sectarian killings".

Law and Order

The fact that such individuals are members (or ex-members) of the UDR gives the lie to the British government claim that the army in Northern Ireland is there as a 'neutral force' restoring 'law and order'.

The only order the army is there to restore is one based upon the bigotry and privileges of the Orange State which has discriminated against the Catholic minority for over 50 years. They have tried to restore this 'order' by a systematic campaign of harassment, torture and victimisation of the Catholic community.

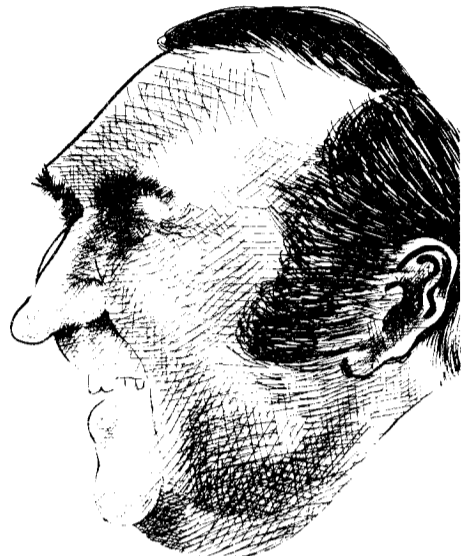
If figures such as McIlwaine decide to take the law into their own hands - organising private 'gangs' for the assassination of individual Catholics - it is not an accident. They are merely carrying to a logical and savage conclusion the role the British army is being called on to play.

Responsibility

The fact that it is the British army which is the key force oppressing the Catholic minority in Northern Ireland places a heavy responsibility on the shoulders of British socialists. What we do - or not do - to champion the right of the Irish people to self-determination will seriously contribute to the outcome of the struggle.

Building a mass campaign calling for the immediate withdrawal of British troops would have a major impact. It would give renewed courage to the oppressed minority (who have been through a demoralising period), undermine the morale of the British army and isolate the loyalist murder squads by removing their main support.

Such a campaign should set itself the task of forcing the government to withdraw the troops (as did the



mass anti-Vietnam war movement in the USA), or of bringing it down.

Failure

It is a major condemnation of the British left that, ten years after the entry of troops onto the streets of Derry or Belfast, there still exists no mass campaign calling for their immediate withdrawal.

The failure of the left to unite in building such a movement is not only an example of their failure to give concrete aid to an oppressed nation fighting for its rights. It is also a failure to understand that this struggle has a direct effect upon the British class struggle too.

It should not have to be pointed out that the repressive laws used against the minority are passed and enacted by Westminster. They are, therefore, a direct threat to the civil liberties of the British people, as Roy Jenkin's 1976 Anti-Terrorism Act proves.

A campaign in defence of the right of the Irish people to self-determination would also strike a blow for the defence of democratic rights in Britain too.

UTOM

One of the major causes for the lack of a mass-action orientated campaign has undoubtedly been the sectarian in-fighting of the left. Movement after movement has been started-up - the ISC (Irish Solidarity Campaign), AIL (Anti-Internment League), TOM (Troops Out Movement) - only to disintegrate through internal wranglings over slogans and tactical issues.

One of the most important recent steps forward has been the launching of UTOM (United Troops Out Movement) which has been able to launch some modest, but serious, actions. The LSA wholeheartedly supports UTOM and believes its main thrust should be towards building a mass-action campaign around the slogan "Troops Out of Ireland Now".

We would lend our voice to that of UTOM in calling on all forces of the left, supporting its platform, to identify with the campaign.

Michael Hawley

IRAN

The Powder Keg

Brake

The main aim of the government has been to rush to establish stable capitalist rule by calling on the masses to give up their arms, abandon their self-elected committees in the army and industry and return meekly to work. They fear the dynamic of a situation in which the masses, increasingly self-confident, could continue the democratisation of Iranian society in a clear anti-capitalist direction.

A key target of their attacks have been workers in the oilfields and other industries who (as the Tehran daily Kayhan reported on Feb 19th) "are not listening to the Ayotollah Khomeini" and over whom "leftist groups have an astonishing amount of influence". Correctly insisting that the Ayotollah's government was elected by no-one, they have refused to abandon their elected committees and demands for legalising workers' control and opening the books of companies to public scrutiny.

Curbing such committees has been a major aim in restoring stable capitalist rule and is the reason why statements from the Barzagan government have become ever more shrill. On Feb 20th, Sadegh Ghotbzadeh, a principal advisor to the Ayotollah, was reported in the New York Times as denouncing "those rebellious elements who are trying to form workers' committees and threatening demonstrations if opposed".

Alternative

The attacks on industrial workers has gone hand in hand with a more general attempt to restore 'order' by curbing the initiative of the masses. Calling on people to return the arms seized during the mass anti-Shah mobilisations, the government has ordered Iran's 450,000 soldiers to return to barracks & accept the discipline of their former pro-Shah officers.

Such moves have clearly brought the government into increasing conflict with rank-and-file soldiers who have set up democratic committees fighting for their right to free speech, to participate in political activity, and to "elect commanders we trust, not appointments from above".

What the government fears from these committees - in industry, in the army and the neighbourhood - is that, representing the democratic interests of the masses, they could become an alternative power structure to their unelected rule. Organised on a regional & national basis, they could lead the struggle for elections to a genuine Constituent Assembly in which a Workers and Peasants' government could emerge.

Prestige

The government's repressive moves have, of course, won the approval of anxious officials both in London & Washington. The Ayotollah Khomeini, who was earlier reviled by US officials & the mass media for refusing to come to a deal with the Shah, is now seen as the main force for shoring up the

crumbling capitalist state and curbing any encroachments on private property.

There can be no doubt that the Ayotollah is well-placed to carry out this task. The fact that today, however, he is forced to oppose - and not champion - the aspirations of the Iranian people will increasingly undermine his prestige. Growing layers will begin to see that the only way of defending the gains they have won - and of extending them - will be by seeking a socialist outcome to the revolutionary struggle.

Such a process has already begun to open up not only in the opposition developing to the Bazargan government among soldiers in the army and workers in the industrial centres. The fact that the Ayotollah has begun to curb the rights of women and the oppressed nationalities - in particular the Kurds - has drawn wider layers into anti-government action. On March 8th, for example, there was a 5000 strong demonstration in Tehran by women protesting the role reserved for them under the Ayotollah's Islamic Republic.

Opportunity

Such a situation will open up major opportunities in the period ahead for revolutionary socialists (such as those organised in the Socialist Workers Party, Iranian section of the Fourth International). By championing the rights of the workers - & their allies among the peasants,



Political prisoners released from Savak jails.

soldiers, women & oppressed national minorities - they have a real chance of winning thousands to see that the solution to their problems lies in breaking with capitalism & fighting for a socialist republic.

It is not just a question of supporting the demands raised but of helping to build the popular organs of power that have already sprouted up in the factories, army and neighbourhoods and trying to link them on a national basis. Such organs, representing the real interests of the mass of Iranians, could begin to pioneer the call for a Workers & Peasants government within a democratically-elected Constituent Assembly.

by Tim Robinson

See page 9 for position of Iranian Trotskyists.